

National Science Foundation,
Division of Financial Management

Grantee Cash Management Section Survey Report



January 2014

The National Science Foundation (NSF), Division of Financial Management (DFM), Grantee Cash Management Section (GCMS) recently completed a customer satisfaction survey focused around the Award Cash Management Service (ACM\$). The survey was aimed at collecting feedback from ACM\$ users on the functionality of the new system and the service they received from their GCMS Accountant. The survey results will help GCMS focus on the system issues the users are experiencing, evaluate customer service outcomes, and then develop plans for service and system improvements. All survey responses were anonymous.

The survey was approved through the NSF Clearance Official and the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) under control number 3145-0215.

A survey notice was sent out on August 15, 2013 to all ACM\$ users advising them that NSF would be administering a customer satisfaction survey for ACM\$ through Survey Monkey. The survey announcement was distributed by the Research.gov communications team and was sent to ACM\$ users at all active grant recipient institutions. The survey was available to users from August 15th through August 30th.

GCM\$ received 776 survey responses. The respondents reflected the awardee population. The majority of the respondents were academic institutions; this was complimented by responses from over 200 users at non-profit organizations. Approximately one third of the respondents had one award; while the majority of respondents had between two and 29 awards. Of note is that 116 user respondents were from institutions that have 100 or more awards indicating that our largest institutions wanted to make their voices heard about ACM\$. In order to minimize duplicate submissions, the survey application only accepted one response from each IP address that accessed the survey.

General findings from the survey indicate that the ACM\$ users:

- Found the training effective and the training materials very useful.
- Thought the transition to ACM\$ was very efficient and effective.
- Are highly satisfied with ACM\$ performance
- Are satisfied with GCM\$ staff customer service.

The survey included some open-ended questions to help the respondents share comments on ACM\$. Selected questions and summarized comments are:

What ACM\$ features do you like the best?*

- User friendly and easy to use.
- Capability to track and report by individual award.
- Daily access to requests.
- Ability to close awards on an as needed basis.
- Elimination of the FFR quarterly report.

What ACM\$ features do you like the least?*

- The new process is like doing an FFR every month rather than every quarter.
- The certification process is not intuitive.
- I am unable to process an upload of a large number of awards without timing out. I must split the upload in half in order to submit, this adds unnecessary time and risk in submitting incorrect data.
- The “ignore and continue” button can be confusing at times.

What can we do to improve ACM\$?*

- Add a print page icon on each page.
- Fix the screen layout so award draw balances do not wrap.
- Currently there is no way to report program income.
- Remove old awards that are still included on our "Open Awards" list.
- Provide better on-line instructions on the Research.gov website.

**User comments in response to the survey questions are in Appendix*

The responses indicated that the transition to ACM\$ went very smoothly. Users like the system, and ACM\$ rates highly when compared to other Federal grant payment systems.

The responses to the customer service questions indicated that the users were very satisfied with GCMS service. However, more probing questions indicated that the areas of GCMS technical knowledge and communications skills may need improvement.

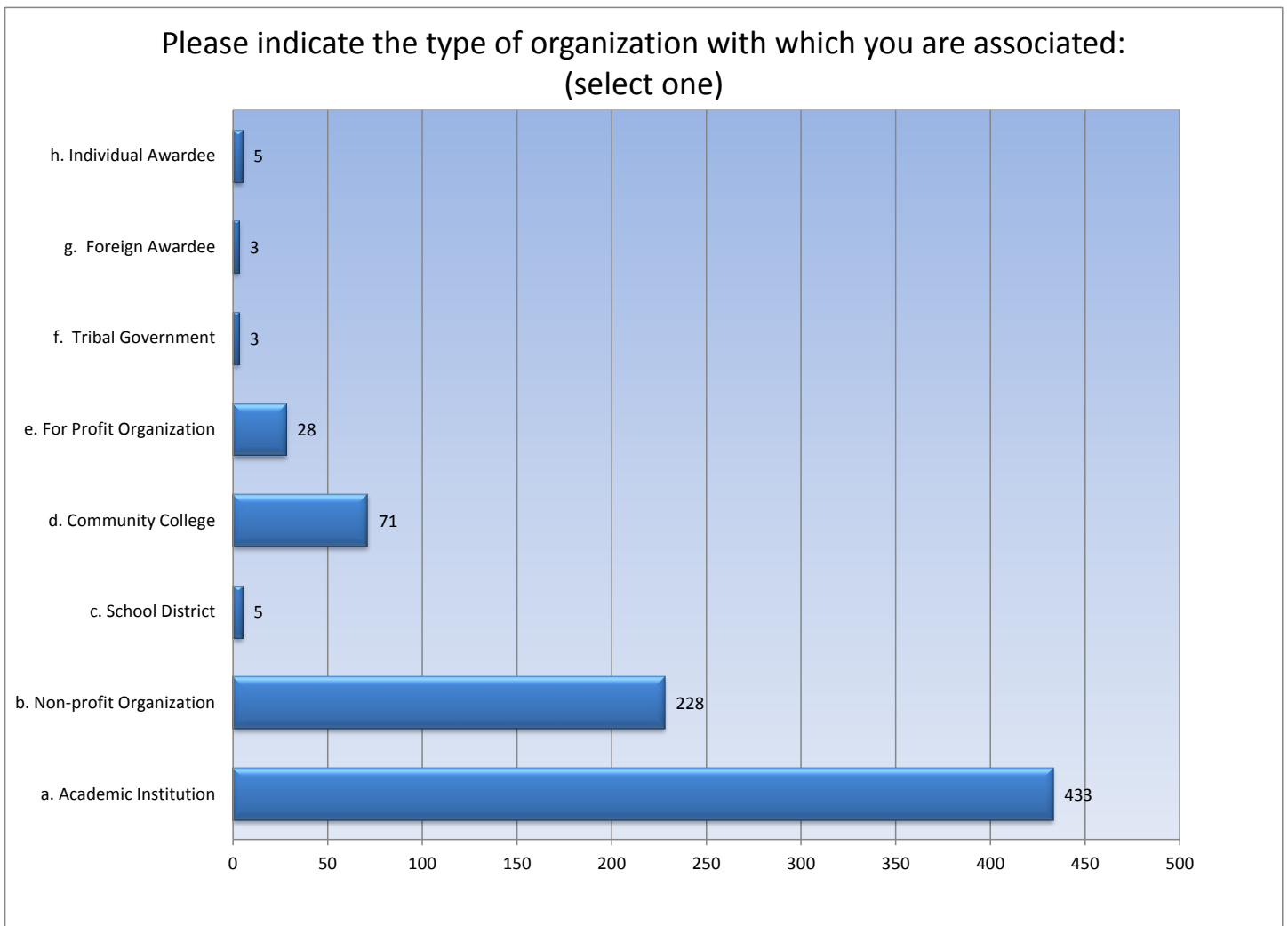
GCM\$ has already begun to use the results from this survey to collaborate with the Research.gov team to further enhance ACM\$’s features, update and distribute training materials to all users, and conduct training session on the latest feature(s) changes within ACM\$ in a timely fashion. On December 20, 2013 there was a Research.gov release which included the following changes in response to the survey feedback:

- Addition of a new print function that will enable users to print all pages of a payment transaction from the summary page.
- Upgrades to performance that will allow users at the largest institutions to upload payment request files for all of their awards.

GCM\$ has initiated steps to update the Research.gov ACM\$ information page. This will include changes to the ACM\$ user guides and a new focus on the existing user population as opposed to the outdated focus on the transition to ACM\$.

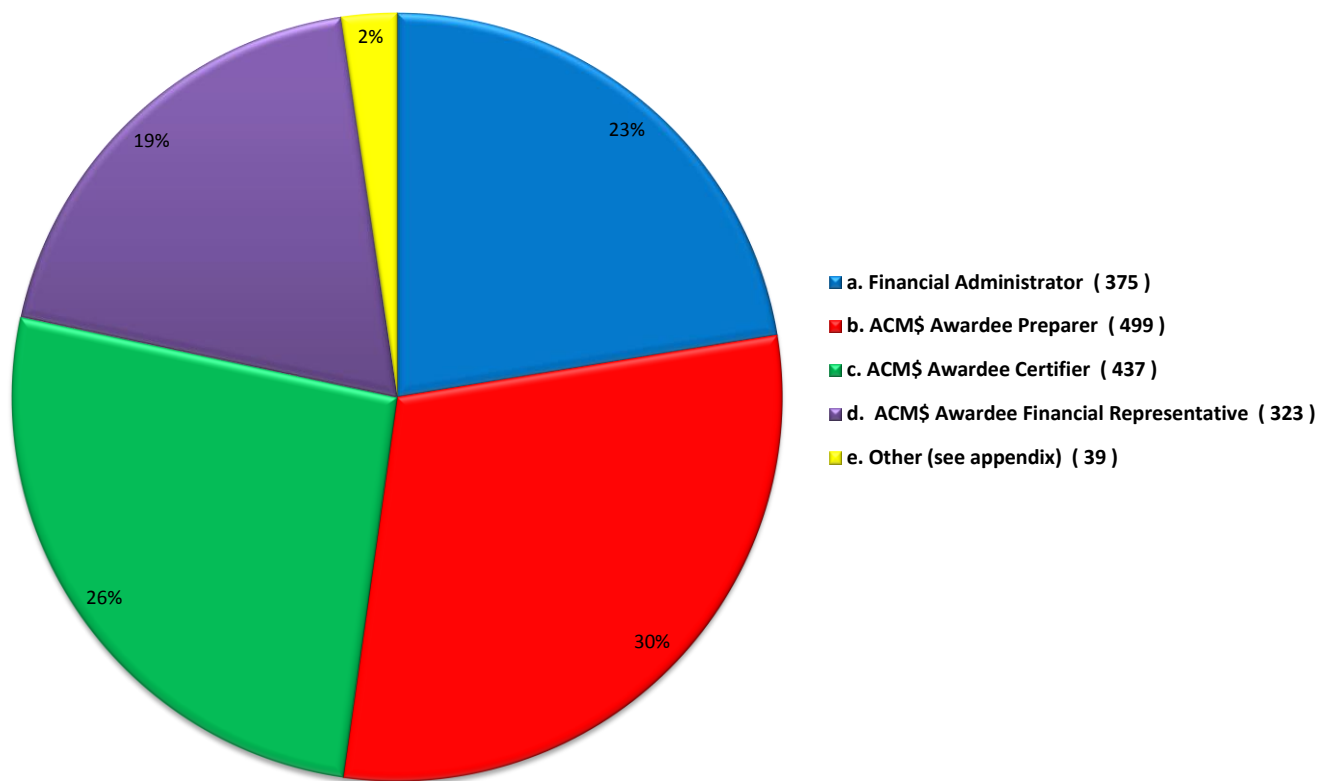
Lastly, GCMS will be completing a new series of user outreach webinars that will include lessons learned over the first six months of full ACM\$ operations. As always, GCMS is committed to respond in an effective and timely manner to the suggestions it receives from its awardee users.

Survey Results

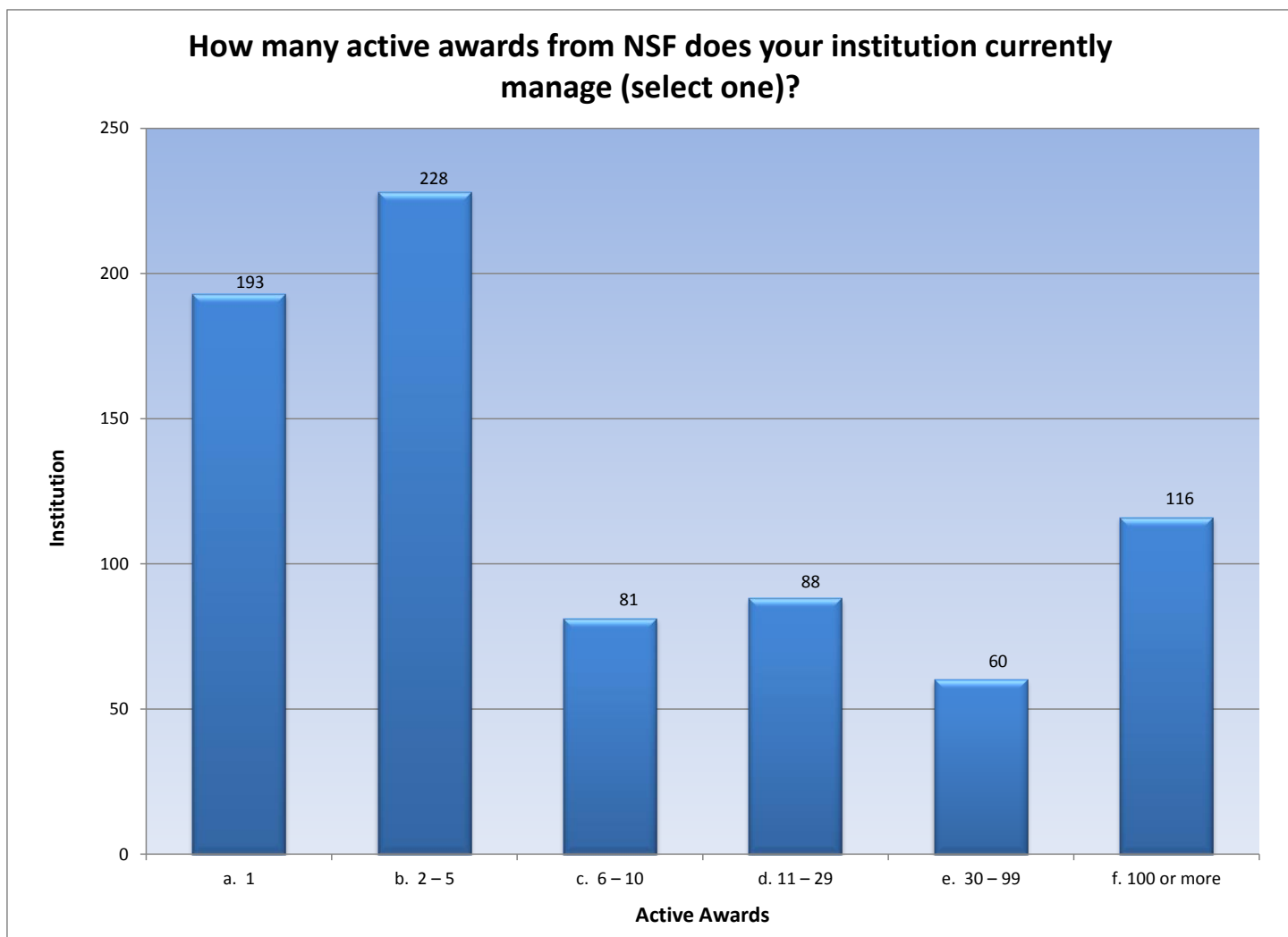


56% of the respondents were from academic institutions, but there was also 30% of the respondents from non-profit awardee institutions.

Please indicate your user role for NSF Grants processes (select all that applies).



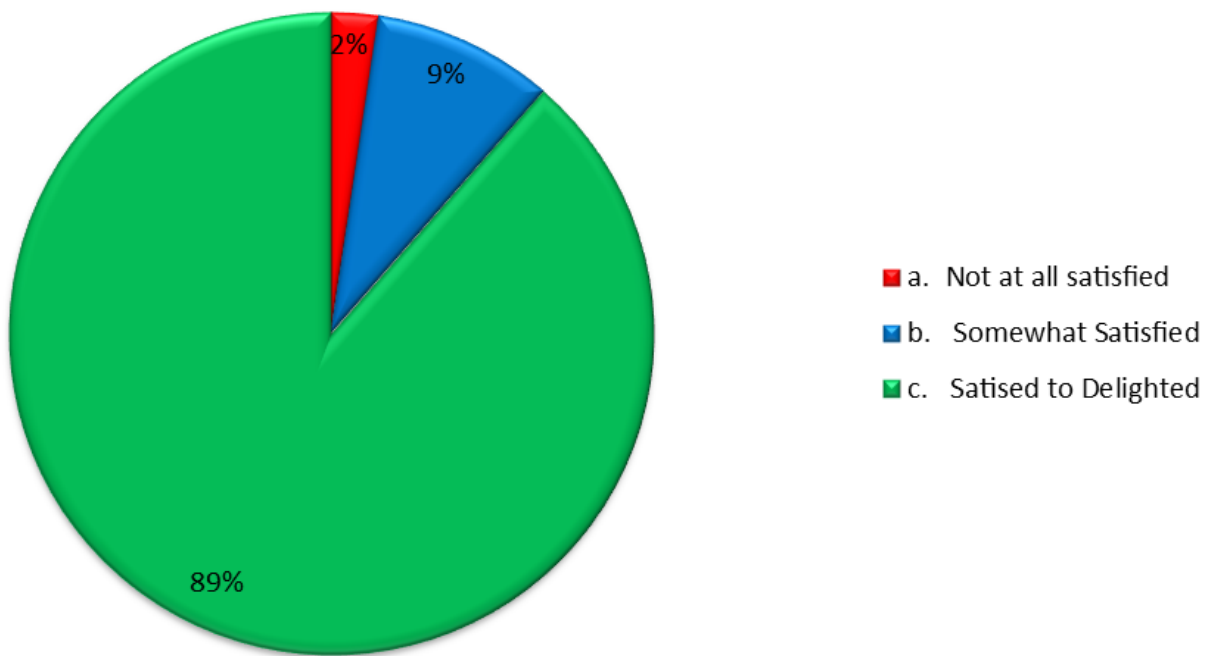
The respondents had multiple user roles for NSF Grants processes such as a ACM\$ Financial Administrator, Awardee Preparer, Awardee Certifier, and Awardee Financial Representative. 2% indicated the user role as "Other" (please see Appendix for detail).



55% of the respondents were from small institutions with 5 or fewer awards.

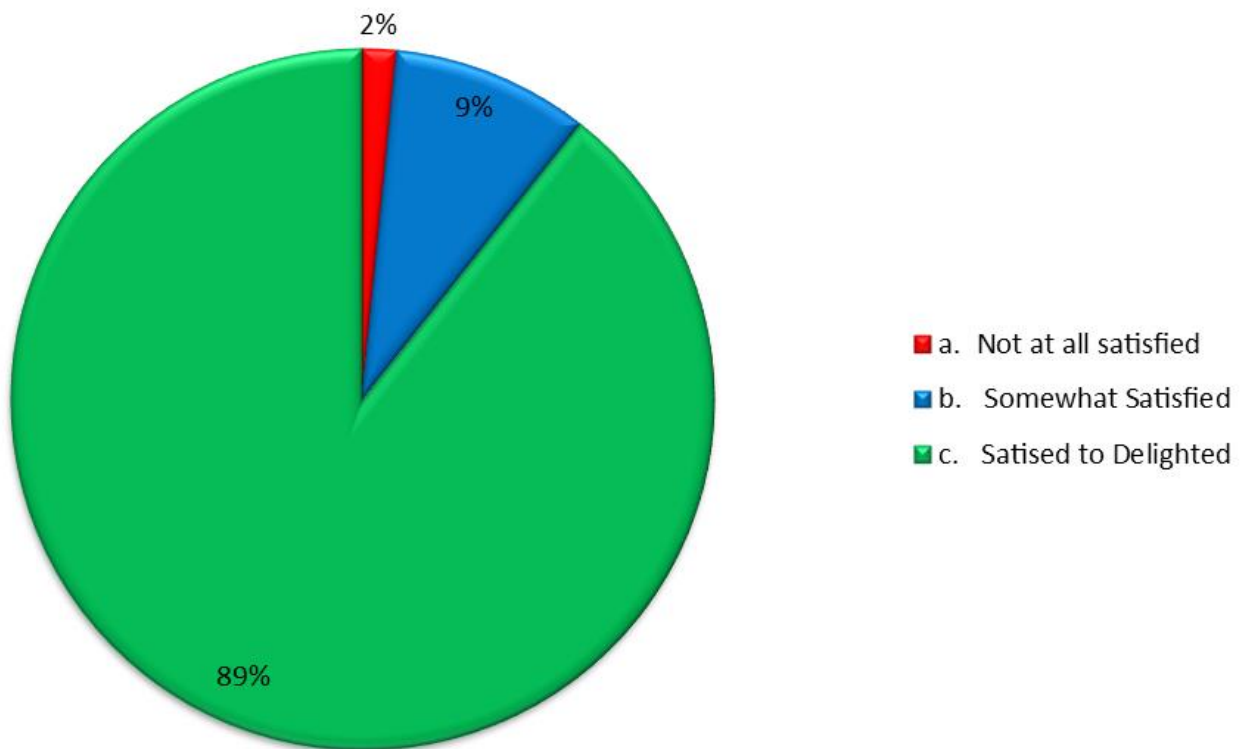
However, 16% of the respondents were from our largest institutions.

How satisfied are you with the training or training materials for the Award Cash Management Service (ACM\$)?



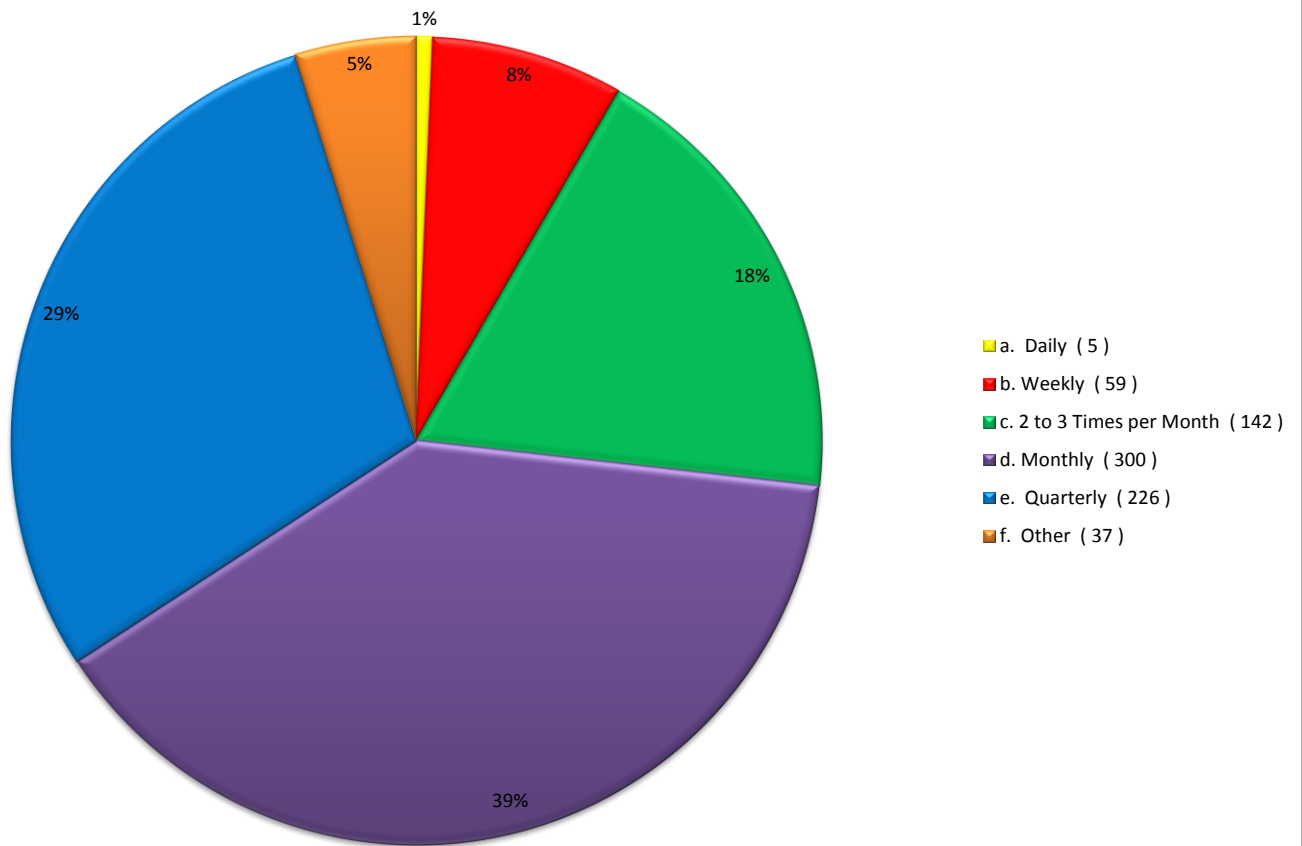
89% of agencies were "Satisfied to Delighted" with the training or training material for the Award Cash Management Service (ACM\$).

How satisfied were you with the transition to ACM\$?



89% of our customers were "Satisfied to Delighted" with their transition to ACM\$!

How often do you use ACM\$?



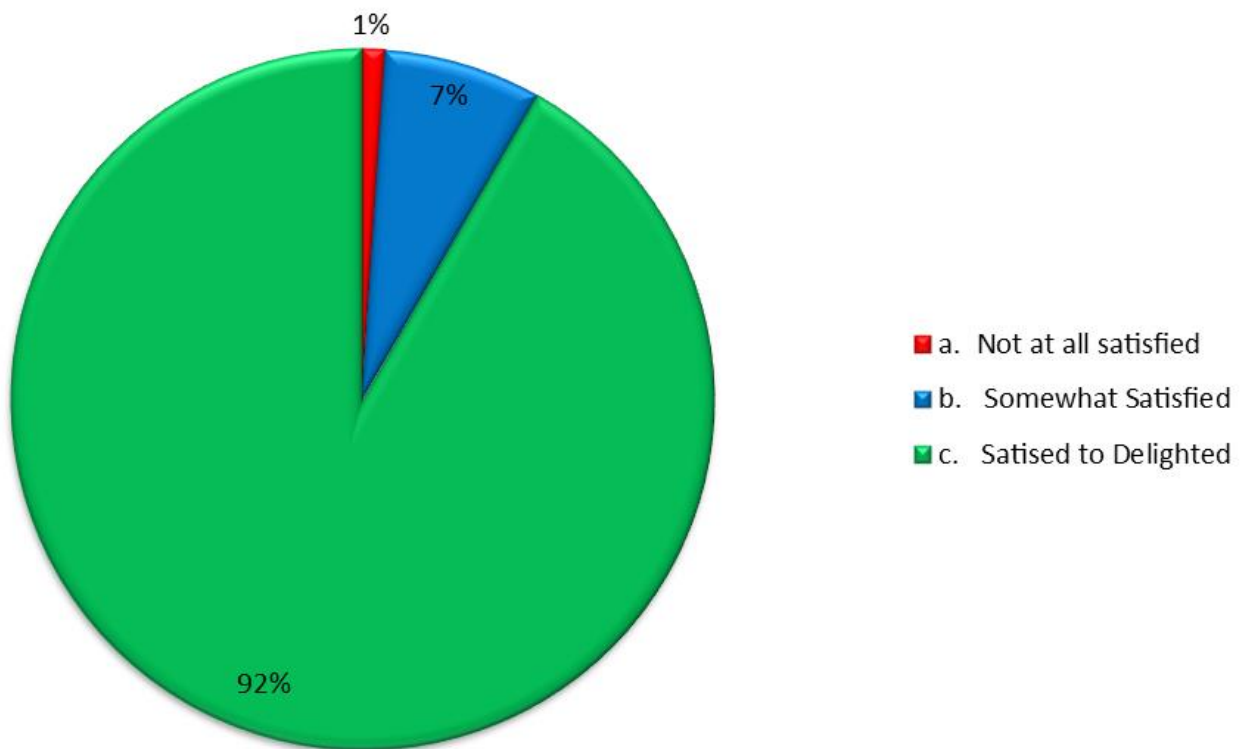
39% of respondents indicated they use ACM\$ on a monthly basis.

29% use ACM\$ on a quarterly basis.

18% use ACM\$ 2 to 3 times per month.

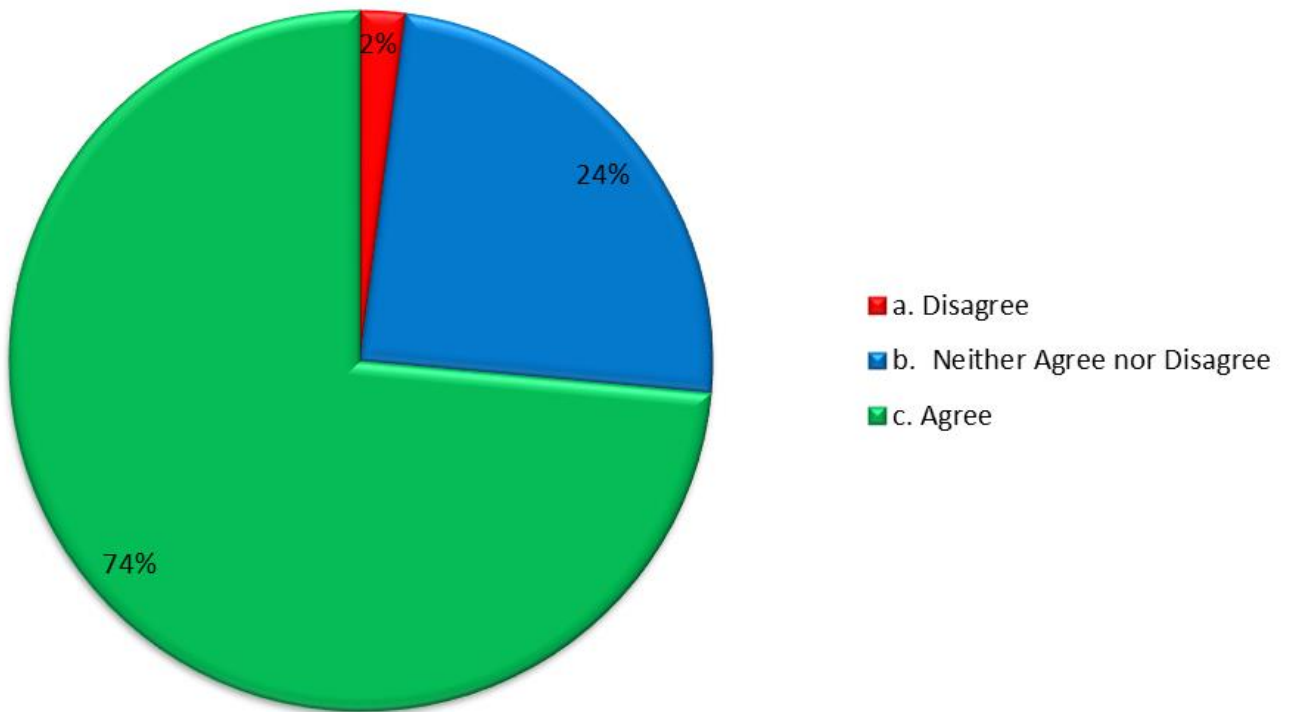
While the remaining 14% of respondents use ACM\$ from weekly to daily or on a periodical basis.

How satisfied are you with the way ACM\$ is performing?



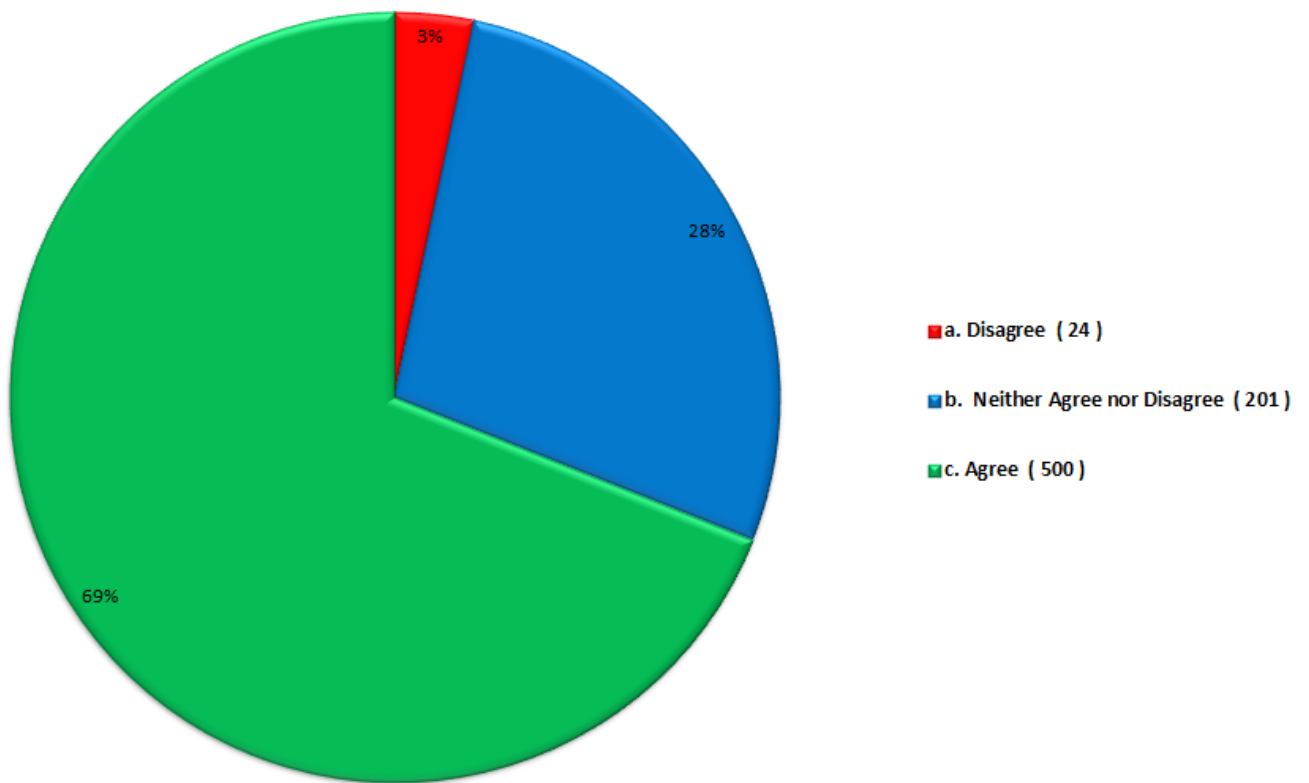
92% of the respondents were "Satisfied to Delighted" the way ACM\$ is performing!!

The Grantee Cash Management Section representative was courteous and professional.



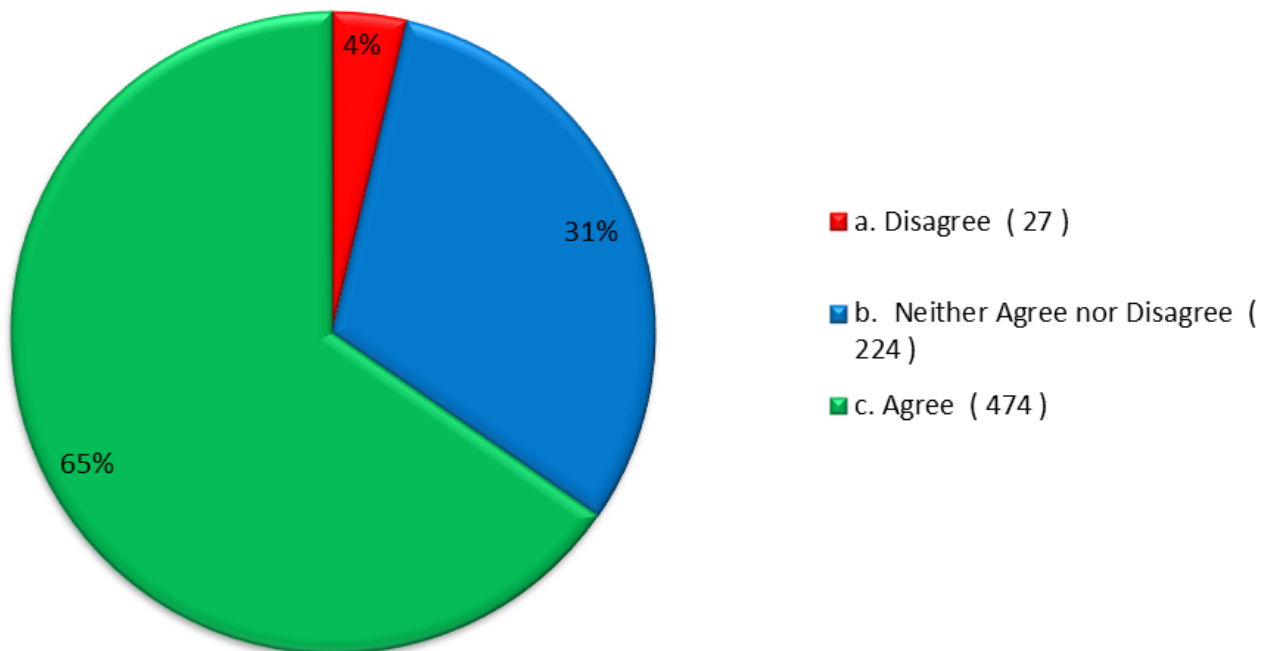
74% of our customers, agree the Grantee Cash Management Section was courteous and professional.

The Grantee Cash Management Section representative was knowledgeable about my issue.



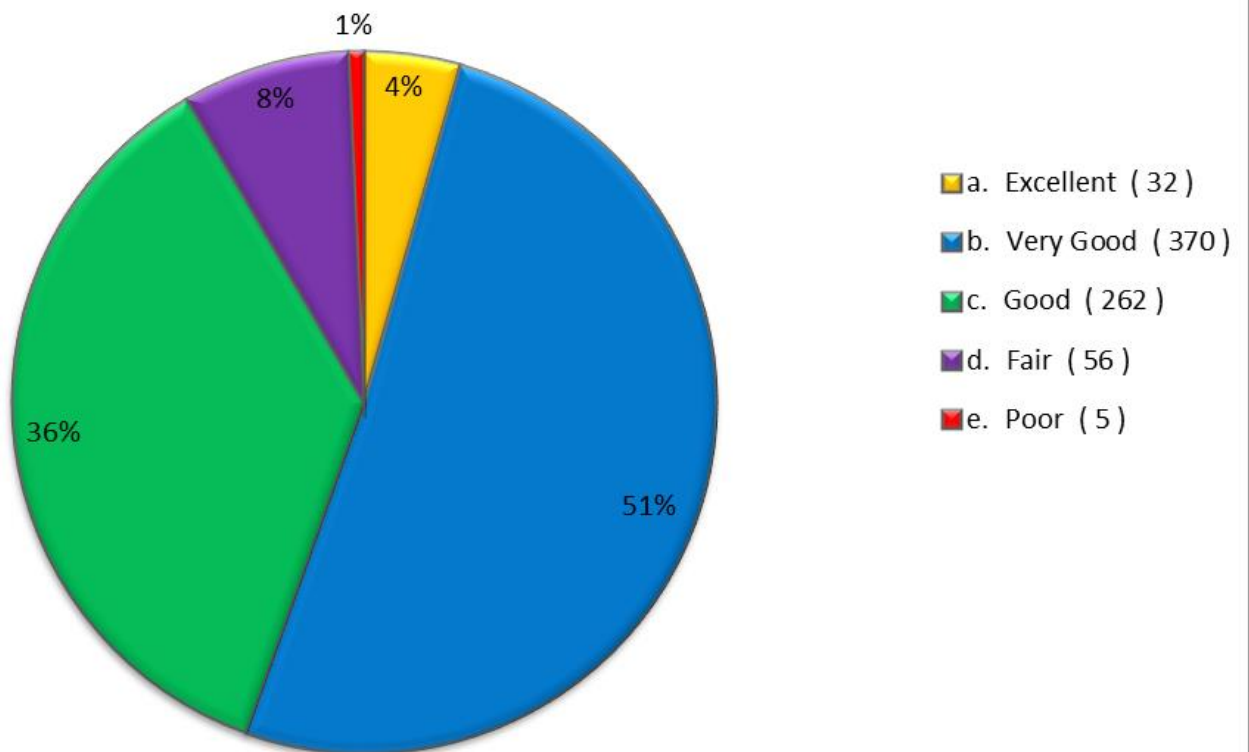
69% of the users feel the GCMS representative was knowledgeable about their issue.

**The Grantee Cash Management Section
representative resolved the issue to your
satisfaction.**



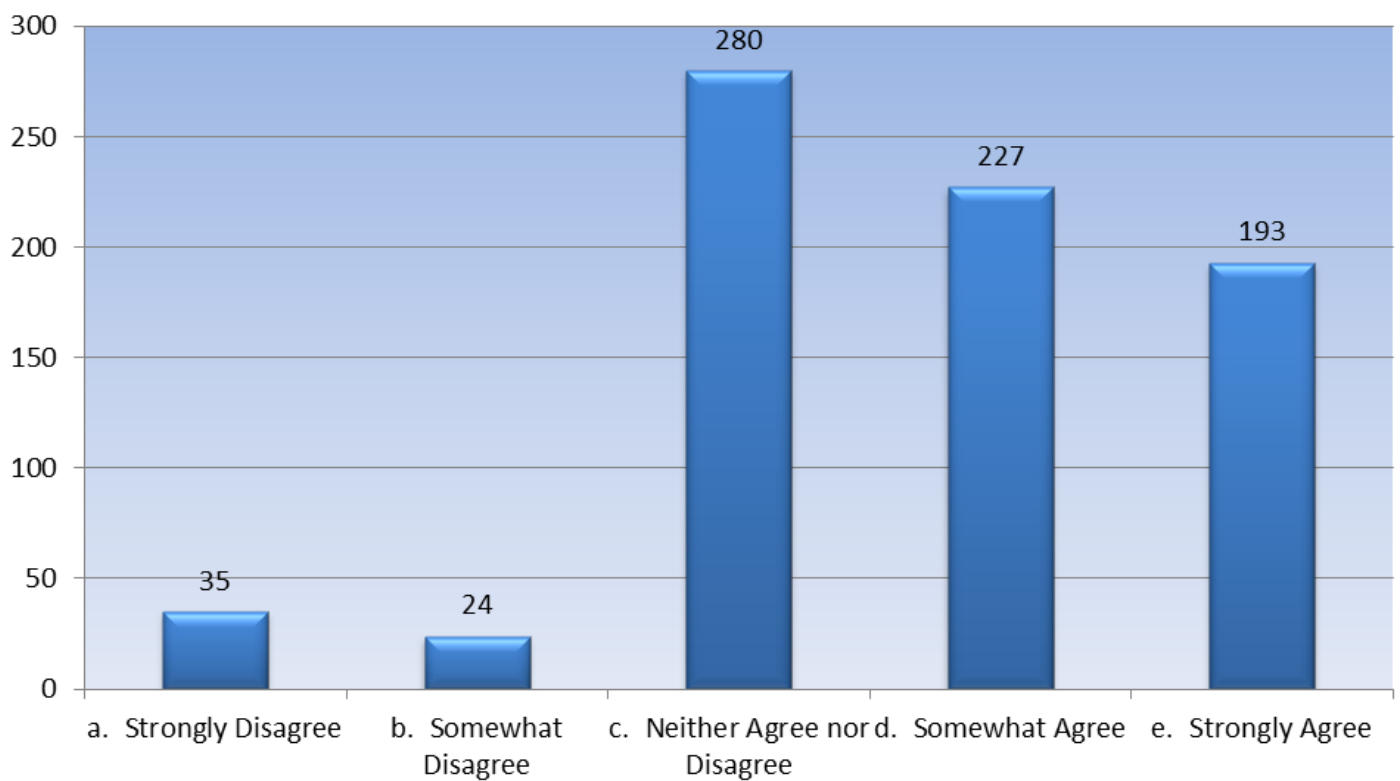
65% of the respondents agreed that the GCMS representative resolved their issue.

How would you grade your overall customer service experience?

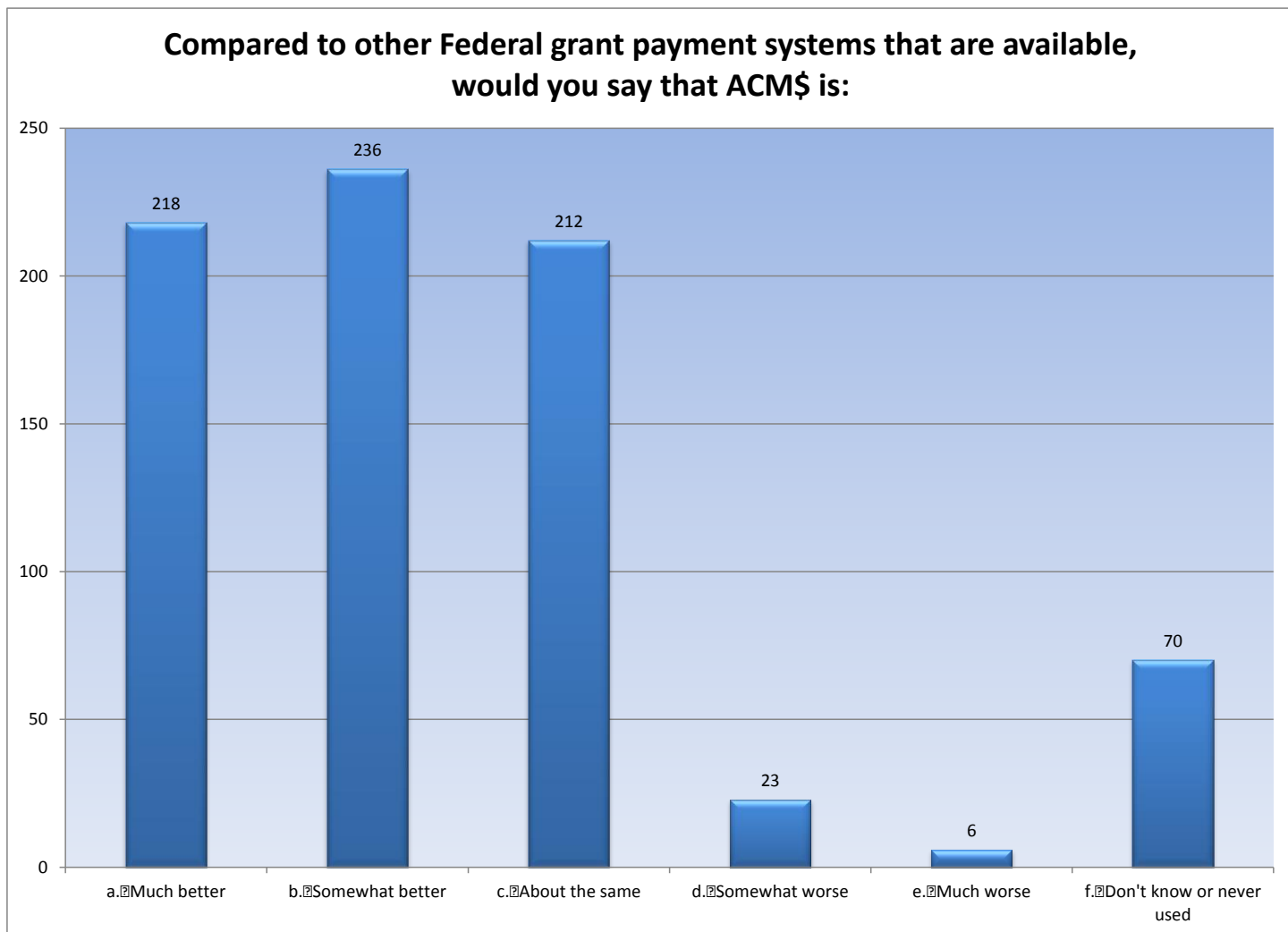


Over 91% of ACM\$ customers had an “Excellent to Good” overall customer service experience with the Grantee Cash Management Section.

**Using ACM\$ improved our ability to track,
manage, and report grant information versus
past systems.**



Over 56% of respondents Agreed that using ACM\$ improved their ability to track, manage, and report grant information versus past systems.



Over 60% of the respondents indicated that they thought ACM\$ was “better” than other Federal grant payment systems.